

Preventing Sewer Backups

Please call us at **215-884-8329** any time night or day...

- if your toilet or sink overflows
- if you see water coming out of a manhole
- if your drains gurgle
- if you smell sewer odor
- if your drains work poorly during heavy rains

Abington Township does not supply your drinking water. If you have questions about the drinking water supply, call *Aqua Pennsylvania Water Company* at **800-711-4779**.

You can reduce your chance of having sewer backup damage if you:

- avoid flushing diapers, cleaning wipes, paper towels or plastic products
- minimize use of your garbage disposal and keep grease out of the drains
- disconnect floor drains and sump pumps from the sewer
- elevate furniture in below ground levels if basement fixtures are present

Abington Township continually improves and maintains the sewer system both to assure proper performance now, and to preserve the integrity of the system for future users. Rehabilitation projects have been completed in Ardsley, Roslyn, McKinley and Glenside to improve wet weather performance and prevent root intrusion. A new project is planned for 2013 to upgrade sewers in Glenside, McKinley and Willow Grove.

Sewers occasionally back up during dry weather; this is generally caused by Fats, Roots, Oil and Grease (FROG). Stringy materials and textiles such as cleaning wipes are often involved, too. When mixed with sewage, oil and grease from kitchen waste form hard deposits that build up inside the pipes, causing them to clog. ***Please discard all grease and animal waste in the trash, and wipe grease from cookware before washing.***

Tree roots are attracted to sewers by the abundance of water and nutrients in sewage, and will penetrate any crack in the pipe or damaged joint to get to it. Once in the pipe, the roots expand until they fill the available space. An annual maintenance program of sewer pipe liner installation has been initiated to keep tree roots out of sewers which have had chronic root problems.

During wet weather, sewers are subject to inflow and infiltration. Surface water enters the sewer via sump pumps, open vents and holes in the pipes; and water from saturated soil seeps into the sewer pipes through joints and cracks. The excess water overloads the pipes, and in extreme cases may cause sewage to back up and overflow from a manhole or a basement plumbing fixture.

We are conducting an inflow abatement program to reduce wet weather overloading from downspouts, floor drains and sump pumps connected to the sanitary sewer. These connections are illegal, and will affect insurance coverage if a backup does occur. **Sump pumps must be permanently piped out of the house to the yard, a seepage pit, or a storm sewer.**